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Lowell Burkhead

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I N T E R C O M

Published Semi-spasmodically By

THE IOWA GROTTO

National Speleological Society



Volume XXVIII Issue 2

March - April, 1992

Material for the next issue of the INTERCOM is due in the hands of the editor by July 1, 1992 with a few days grace for those later trips. This should include material covering May and June, 1992. Send articles, trip reports, photographic negatives, prints, or slides, artwork, cartoons, etc. for publication to:

The Iowa Grotto meets at 7:30 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month (third Wed. in Dec.) in room 125 of Trowbridge Hall on the campus of the University of Iowa.

This number calls out Iowa Grotto rescue personnel

Cover: Marc Ohms and Chris Beck descending the 85 foot entrance pit to Maze Cave,
Dubuque County, Iowa. Photo by Scott Dankof



IOWA GROTTO
National Speleological Society
P. O. Box 228
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Chairman - - - - - Mike Lace
Vice-Chairman - - - - - Marc Ohms
Secretary-Treasurer - - Jay Wells

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IOWA GROTTO MEETING MINUTES

Regular meeting March 25, 1992

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 p.m. after a slide show of photos from Lechuguilla Cave by Chris Beck. TRIP REPORTS: Charlie Winterwood reported on a trip to Star Valley Cave, WI. Mike Lace reported on a trip to the Buzzard Ridge area and found two small caves. The Ozark Wildlife area was also visited. Marc Ohms and Chris Beck reported on a CRF (Cave Research Foundation) trip into Mammoth Cave, KY. Mike Lace reported surveying Glover's Cave in Fayette Co. and Indian Cave in Johnson Co. March Coldwater Cave trips included a trip into the Guardian Fangs Passage by Mike Nelson and Larry Welch to check leads. Mike Lace and Stacey Cyphert checked out a dig just past the Piggy Passage. A trip to Mielke Cave and Drahn Cave along with the discovery of a new cave in the area was reported on by Mike Lace. FUTURE TRIPS: A survey trip to numerous small caves will be on March 28. The spring MVOR in April and a proposed trip to Des Moines County are upcoming. OLD BUSINESS: The IOWA CAVE MAP BOOK is almost ready for printing. NEW BUSINESS: The annual report was recieved and accepted by the NSS. Greg McCarty mentioned that the state was considering logging in state preserves. It was decided to move the deadline for INTERCOM material up to the first of the month so that INTERCOM's can be passed out at meetings saving considerable postage. The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Regular meeting April 22, 1992

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m. by Chairman Mike Lace. The meeting followed a slide presentation on his trip to San Salvador Island in the Bahamas by Marc Ohms. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. The Treasurer reported \$179.29 in the club treasury. TRIP REPORTS: Marc Ohms reported on a trip with Mike Nelson to Devil's Den Cave, Wet Reebok Cave, Stafford's Sandstone Cave, and A. J. Spring Cave. Chris Beck reported on a cave mapping trip with Gary Engh, Marc Ohms, and Mike Lace. They mapped Cliff Cave, Sullivan Cave, Chimney Cave, and Skull Cave. Mike Lace reported on the survey trip to Maze Cave. He reported that another large passage was dug open. Coldwater Cave trips included a clean up trip in Monument Passage by Doug and Alex. Mike Lace reported on a survey trip in the Guardian Fangs Passage with Larry Welch. Doug Schmucker and Jay Wells had a trip to the Monona area. Marc Ohms reported on a lead checking trip across the river from Hatfield's Cave in Jones County. Two new caves were discovered. Greg McCarty reported on a lead checking trip near Fayette which yielded one new cave. He also reported on a lead checking trip to near Phelps Park. Some small crevices were checked. Al Jagnow reported on a trip with Bert Jagnow to some sandstone caves near Red Wing. FUTURE TRIPS: Lowell Burkhead is planning a trip to a crevice near Guttenburg on Sunday. A trip to Des Moines County will be announced. Other trips include the spring MVOR, the grotto picnic, the NSS convention, and a beginner's vertical workshop May 30 and 31. There will be a geological trip in the Galena, IL area May 16. A Cedar County surveying trip will be announced. A vertical rescue training session will also be announced. OLD BUSINESS: The annual grotto picnic date was set for August 22 near Bluffton. NEW BUSINESS: The Iowa Grotto Cave File including the recent updates has 630 entries. There was a climbing accident in the news at Palasades Kepler State Park. Lowell Burkhead brought up the fact that location coordinates were not consistent throughout the cave file or the membership. A discussion followed as to the best way to take care of the problem and to standardize the way locations should be entered. A motion was passed to adopt the standard geological notation of from largest to smallest with the smallest quarter section to the right. This can be adopted without changing the cave file form sheets. The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

INTERCOM MATERIAL DEADLINE CHANGED

Authors, take note, material is now due on the first instead of the fourteenth. INTERCOM's can be printed and passed out at the meeting on the fourth Wednesday.

This will save us about \$20 per issue and get us an INTERCOM sooner if we want to come to a meeting to get it. I am hoping that this may get a few more people to a meeting now and then as well as saving money. There will certainly be a few days leeway on the new deadline for those later trips that will go in the back of the issue anyway. I don't yet know what the cutoff date will have to be, but if I get it while still typing, it gets put in. If too much shows up late, you will see it in a later issue. Thanks. INTERCOM Editor

IG CAVERS FOLD, CAVE TOO DIFFICULT

So far there have been no reports of success in exploring The Cave puzzle on the back cover of the last issue by Iowa Grotto members. There have been several reports of failure however. In this case, reports of failure will not be included in the INTERCOM. I suspect that there may be a lack of understanding of how the puzzle is supposed to work and the instructions weren't good enough. I will therefore attempt to explain it well enough that it can be done by even cavers who have never before explored a paper cave. (Some cavers can't find the floor of the cave without mud.)

The puzzle works by having duplicate information at $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch intervals across the page. When your eyes see duplicate information, you are fooled into seeing a flat surface. It looks as though both eyes are looking at the same spot but they are actually seeing identical spots $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches apart. The trick is to have one eye looking at one title and the other eye looking at the other. The obvious spacing difference in the center of the puzzle is the depth information but you can only process that information if your eyes are looking at different points that are identical. Here's how its done.

Hold or place the puzzle at arms length. Look over the top of the page at something behind it by about three feet. Using the two dots below the titles, adjust that distance until there are three. If you see four, the middle two must be merged. With that accomplished, tilt your head back and forth until the middle two are perfectly merged up and down. Bringing this middle dot into perfect merging, the background of the puzzle should now be in focus, but don't make any fast moves. Don't even blink or you will lose it. Slowly scan down from the dot onto the flat background then just as slowly, scan to your left to the left side of the spacing information. Each two letter column is a step of depth into the cave. Follow them in by focusing one step at a time along the left wall. There are nine levels of depth including the flat background and the rear wall of the cave. The farther away you can view it, the deeper it gets. Remember, if you make it, send in a trip report. Good luck; Lowell Burkhead

trip reports

GOOD LEADS CLOSE TO HOME

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa
March 21, 1992
Mike Nelson and Larry Welch

by Mike Nelson

The water was up and the bad trips impossible to take. Whew. There was some miserable survey to be had in Guardian Fangs Passage, just the kind of thing Larry can't resist. And it wasn't that far in, just the thing I can't resist at this early state of trying to get wetsuit caving tough again. In "The Fang", we opted to try the dry overhead passage instead of the ear dipper. It's worth it unless you're really into that sort of thing.

Larry hadn't been here before, but his memory for details is far superior to mine. He was eager to check a lead he had seen on the map in this passage that I, who had

been here twice, never gave much thought to. It was one of CWC's typical mud filled passages with just a little bit of tempting "unfill" on one side. A little digging and Larry pushed about 25 feet of virgin and determined it was an excellent lead, for Mike, Lace or Stacey Cyphert, the slim crew. He even pronounced it better than a lot of the stuff they had been grubbing around in lately. (No wonder I've always managed to refuse his invitations to look at stuff in the upstream loop.)

We then tried to push into the next lead, the one where the compass crapped out on survey trip that we just missed hitting the 10 mile mark December 20, 1986. It started out nice but rapidly got low. The sound of falling water in the dome ahead was much greater than the flow in this passage could account for. It egged me on into the tight stuff. I was suddenly overcome with the immediate desire to be somewhere, anywhere, else. I backed out quick, losing my backup lights which I had placed in my helmet which I was pushing ahead of me into that snugger. Larry retrieved my gear as he inspected the passage for himself. He also found it tight but again pronounced it better than a lot of what they had been grubbing around in lately.

Next we checked out the elliptical phreatic tube that I had poked into on my very first trip into Coldwater. It seemed quite "goable" but with the higher water flow, it wasn't time to do it now. As is so common in tight, wet passages, the caver dams the water up ahead of him until he is forced to retreat or be baptised by immersion. He pronounced it better than

Then Larry pushed through the restriction on Guardian Fangs main passage past the survey to look at the dome. He really liked the upper level lead there but didn't feel up to surveying into the dome as we had planned after all the digging, pushing and other forms of nonsexual self abuse he had performed so far today. We then trekked on out to pizzaville, calm in the assurance that spring runoff conditions would force us to look closer at these long overlooked leads in the near future.

CAVING IN THE HOLELY LAND

Sullivan's Cave, Cliff Cave, Chimney Cave, Spider Cave, Skull Cave, #2 Cave, Coral Cave, Jackson County, Iowa

March 28, 1992

by Marc Ohms

Marc Ohms, Chris Beck, Mike Lace, and Gary Engh

In the 1950's, the Quint Cities Grotto found this valley in Jackson County and surveyed five of the caves that are located there. In the winter of 1991, Mike Lace and I found the valley and a total of seven caves. A return trip to survey the caves was planned.

On March 28, we returned to the valley and surveyed the seven caves. It is a small valley but has so many holes it looks like swiss cheese. There is only seven caves but many holes, tubes and shelters. These tubes, caves, etc. occur along three different bedding planes and are phreatic. Many, if not all of the holes were larger at one time and many have speleothems in them which have long since dried out.

We started the survey with Sullivan's Cave which is 200 feet long. The entrance is large and has a small crawlway leading off. This leads into the first dome room. Another small crawlway leads to the second room which is well decorated.

The next cave we surveyed was Cliff Cave and was 105 feet long. The entrance to this cave is located 20 feet up a bluff and is, by far, the best part of the cave. From the entrance to the end is a crawlway and piles and piles of coon crap. A more fitting name would be Sh-t Hole.

Mike and Gary surveyed #2 Cave and checked some holes while Chris and I surveyed Spider Cave, Chimney Cave, Coral Cave, and Skull Cave. I must apologize to Mike Lace and Gary Engh who helped survey Cliff Cave. I forgot to put their names on the map. Sorry Guys!

RUMORS & RIDGEWALKING

Odessa Mama Cave, Windmill Cave, Penny Cave, Jones County, Iowa

April 5, 1992

by Mike Lace

Mike Lace, Marc Ohms, Pat Schenck and Alex Krakinovsky

The bluffs along the Maquoketa River are wild, rugged and dotted with caves. Most of these caves are small and barely worth the scrambling it takes to reach them but then there are a few that make it all worthwhile. The four of us set out to ridgewalk an area that had little caving history and only one vague rumor of a "big cave". The hiking was rough but would be much worse once the underbrush thickened in a few months.

The landowner had mentioned that when he was a kid, he had been in a cave along the bluff that "went back a ways". This lead matched a caver's description of a "good sized" cave in the same area. Many of the shadows we checked were simply that - tantalizing dark spots on the bluffline. The rest of us would have walked right by the cave entrance, which was low and hard to see from below, if Alex hadn't spotted it. The entry sloped steeply away much like the entrances of other large caves in the area, into a large chamber about 150 feet long, 50 feet wide and 50 feet high. We poked around the perimeter of the room, looking for any continuation without finding any leads, only a few bats. In the center of the room rests a mammoth breakdown block surrounded by tons of smaller debris. The cool of the chamber was a nice change from the overheated scramble to reach the cave. Alex named it "Odessa Mama Cave" (Odessa being the name of his home town in the Ukraine).

We continued our hike, stopping to find and survey "Penny Cave", a small skunk-used 15 foot crawl. Several hundred yards later we reached a ravine and sure enough there was a small shadow near the top. The shadow held true to Engh's law of lead checking, "close up or far away, a dark spot on the wall is still just a dark spot on the wall" but that didn't include the low slot beneath it that couldn't be seen from below. A belly-squeeze let us pop up into a single walking height room that was heavily decorated and unspoiled. "Windmill Cave", as we later named it, consists of only the one room with no leads off of it but well worth the visit. After a quick survey, we called it a day and trudged back to the cars, knowing that we would be back soon to see what other caves could be found lurking in the bluff shadows.

OUT AND ABOUT

April 5 & 6, 1992

by Mike Nelson

Delores and I had loafed about awful late into the day to consider going caving. But it got to be so nice we headed out sometime after 11:00 a.m. and decided to check in with the gang at Doug Schmucker's new cave. We hung around the entrance, exchanged unintelligible garble with the boys in the cave (we all recognized each other's voices but sentences wouldn't carry through the conduit) and basked in the warm spring sun.

It was some time before the guys, Doug, Jay Wells, and Mike Lace, emerged at protracted intervals, each looking as pleased as if he'd just lost his virginity. Each raved on about the grooviness of this new find in old territory, its abundance of speleothems compared to its neighboring caves, its awesome as yet unplumbed pit with

its formidable rigging challenges and the hopeful potential of any cave in the Big Spring basin that gets seriously deep. They derigged the cave, removing some ingenious rope padding, and leaving 30 feet of stubborn rope. We helped them carry gear back, then left them to write their own report.

They checked in with the landowner, we headed out to look at some of the loose ends we had left to frazzle through most of last year's hiatus. We found: Come-Along Spring, an abandoned resurgence we had dug open a while back, to be flowing briskly; Livinggood Annex high and too dirty to inspect yet; the exponential growth of a cave, (story to be related on page 40); and another good potential dig lead flowing with good spring run-off (if anyone wants a good dig project, this is it and it goes free of charge to anyone willing to work at it). Another lead we had been given didn't materialize into anything despite making contact with 3 of the 5 parties we were referred to (one was deceased and another just not home). An old acquaintance we stopped to visit gave us a lead of a sinkhole with a hole into the bedrock (again see page 40). We also found a darn good pizza in Waukon, location kept secret at landowner's request, but I do have my price (sausage and mushrooms, please).

IN SEARCH OF, THE MAZE CONTINUES

Maze Cave, Dubuque County, Iowa

April 12, 1992

by Chris Beck

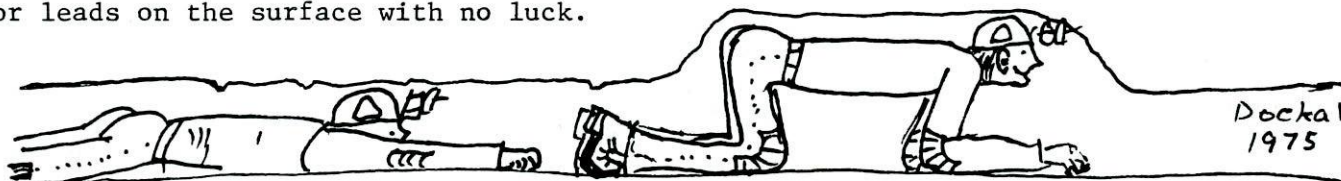
Chris Beck, Marc Ohms, Mike Lace, Scott Dankof, Gary Engh

Our close proximity to the cave let Marc and I get a head start on the days work. We arrived a half hour before the rest of the group to rig the drop and make a surface survey to Spiral Cave. Mike and Scott arrived just as we were preparing to get on rope. They reported that Gary did not show up but thought he might come later. Marc and I then rappelled into the cave together on separate ropes to help each other in an attempt to check two leads about 30 feet off the bottom of the shaft. We found the rock was too soft to enter, so we rappelled on down and were soon joined by Mike and Scott.

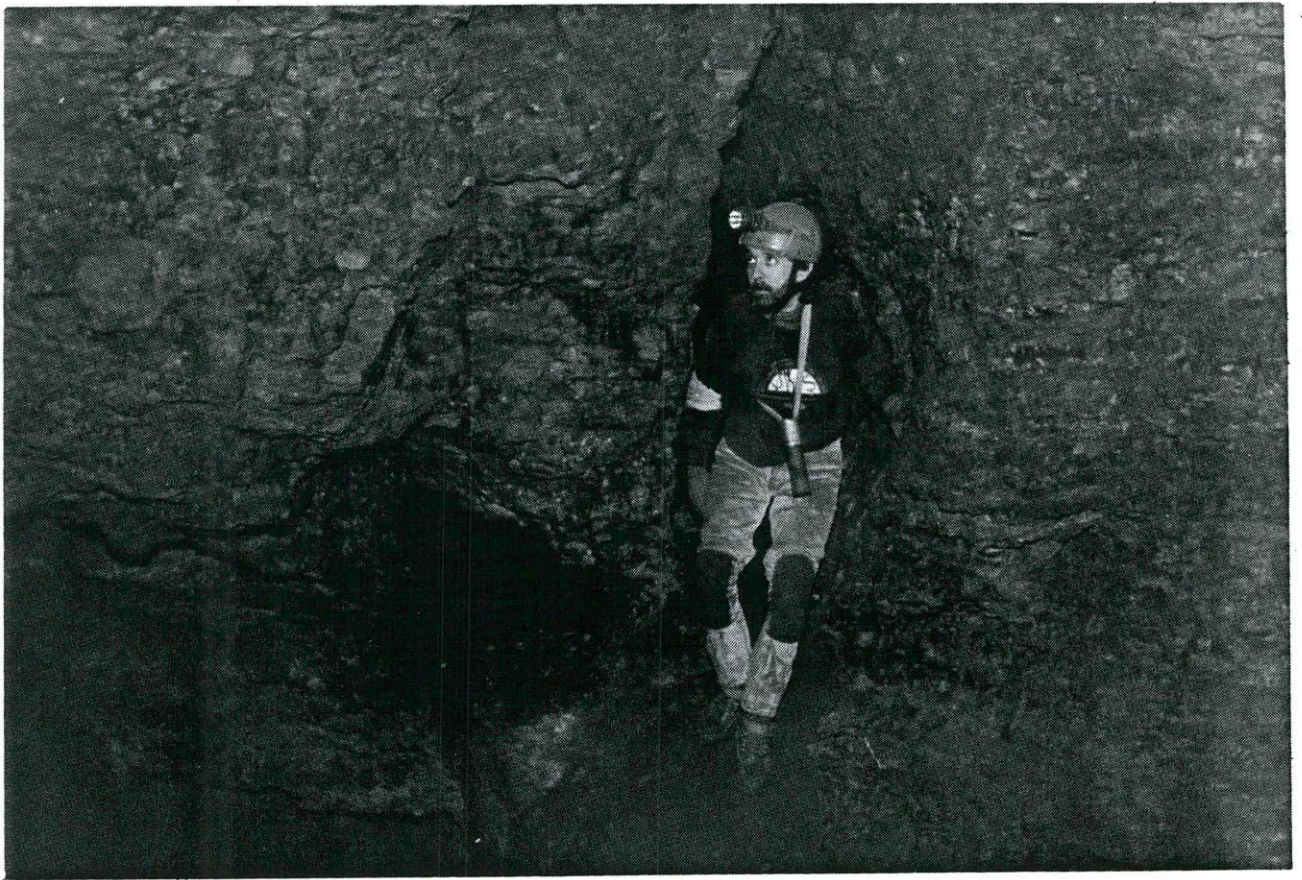
We then made our way to the survey through all the ups and downs and many confusing intersections. When we arrived at our chip, many comments were made about the orange dust as Scott adjusted a contact lens. Mike and Marc decided to start surveying while I took Scott ahead to take some pictures of some of the bigger passages we had found on our last trip. Scott and I had just arrived in the first room when Marc and Mike arrived and reported they had two compasses and no clinometer.

We then decided not to survey but just look for the end of the cave and hopefully a new route to the shaft or maybe to Spiral Cave. We checked the leads we had left on our last trip and rechecked the ones we had with no luck. We then went to digging on the small holes that were filled with the soft orange sandy soil so abundant in the cave. After just a few scoops, I was in a small crawl that ended in only 30 feet or so. Marc found another loop but Mike found more than 200 feet through several tight squeezes.

After exhausting all the good leads and our bodies for the day, we headed out of the cave with a short stop in the Big Drift for Scott to take some photos. When we arrived on the surface, we were met by Gary who had arrived late and had been looking for leads on the surface with no luck.



A room! I can stand up!!



Mike Lace in Maze Cave, Dubuque County, Iowa.

Photo by Scott Dankof



Marc Ohms and Chris Beck in The Drift, Maze Cave.

Photo by Scott Dankof

A COLD DIP ON A SHORT TRIP

Twin Canoe Cave, Fayette County, Iowa
April 17, 1992

by Greg McCarty

I had some time this evening to have a short cave trip and get a little exercise at the same time, so I decided to check out a cave right by Fayette that had been laying around for a couple of years. John Fuhrman and I located it while taking a long canoe trip on the Volga River May 24, 1990. We didn't check it out that day because it would have involved getting very wet and muddy and we were running late for getting to our take-out point before dark. We didn't make it but we did cover about 16 of the 17.5 miles before darkness closed in. I had intended to go back and check it out for some time but being almost two miles from my house, I just hadn't found the time to make the long trip.

Now seemed like a good day. It was near 60 degrees during the day and the ice was long gone from the river. I parked near the golf course and walked through the woods to the river. I quickly found that the long stretch of bluff containing the cave has only an occasional chunk of shoreline. The only practical way to proceed was to jump in the river and wade a quarter mile downstream to the cave. Once the initial shock was over, it wasn't bad at all as the water was usually less than mid-thigh deep. The Volga is a very clear and rocky stream around Fayette and the firm riverbed makes for few holes to stumble into while walking downstream. When going upstream in a river, the holes get deeper, gradually providing you with a warning, but when going downstream, they can drop off precipitously.

As I plodded along, I climbed out whenever there was a hole to check. Some required climbing to reach but I needed the practice anyway. I found one little crawlway cave about ten or so feet long. It was very dirty and a raccoon hole continued. Later I found a very clean sideways crawl cave that went about 15 feet and then turned a corner and became too small. I took some pictures and then jumped back into the river to continue downstream. This time, though, I rolled a rounded rock with the tread on my jungle boots. Unable to regain my balance with the backpack on, I pitched over into the cold water. I regained my feet quickly but the dunking took my breath away for a few seconds. Fortunately my camera was in a high pouch inside my backpack and didn't get wet.

After checking a few more holes without finding anything, I finally came to Twin Canoe Cave. I named it that because you can canoe right into the entrance where the cave immediately splits into two separate passages. I had to wade back upstream a little ways to find a place where some rocks stuck out above the water so I could ditch my pack and get out the camera. I took some shots of the entrance and into the two passages, then I geared up to check it out. The right branch led up out of the knee-deep water and into a chamber. The chamber was six feet wide by eight feet long by up to three feet high. The floor featured many animal tracks. The left branch was at water level and forced you to turn sideways to get past the entrance to it. After getting good and wet, you could crawl out onto a gooey black mud bar and crawl beside a water channel for the next fifteen feet or so. Then you had to crawl back into the water and do a flat-out belly crawl in it for another body length before it could be seen going up into a little chamber. I decided to skip this last part as it would have been very nasty for the distance I had to go to get back out and the likely rewards would have been slim or none. There also was the problem of the freshly chewed green sticks I could see up ahead. It looked a little suspicious to me. The total length of the cave is about 45 feet, making it the longest cave in the immediate Fayette area (so far).

I had worked my way back to the entrance and waded out into the river a ways so I could clean some of the black mud off me when I heard a loud crashing and splashing behind me. I quickly turned around thinking that part of the ceiling must have come down. Instead, it was a panicked beaver! He was just flying out of the cave and raising quite a ruckus. I never did actually get to see him run through the shallow water but the dis-

inctive vee waves in the deeper water as he swam away were all the confirmation I needed. Beavers are not aggressive animals at all but I don't think it would have been a good idea to crawl the last few feet and poke my nose into his den while I was in a restrictive crawlway.

It was getting pretty dark by the time I continued downstream. The water also was deeper. By the time it was crotch deep, I could only continue safely by holding the flashlight underwater. This allowed me to barely see that the bottom was still there. The riverbed had become silty as well, so I was stirring it up as I walked. I finally decided I had better quit without covering the last stretch of bluff. I had waded about a third of a mile and that was about enough at these temperatures. The only problem with not walking past all the bluffs was that I now had to figure out a way to climb up over them. I did not want to wade back up the river! It took a little while before I found a route that was safe enough on the crumbly rock. When you are soaking wet and all alone, while wearing a backpack and slimy coveralls, you have to be a little more careful about climbing up loose bluffs and hillsides. Eventually, I worked my way up through the woods and onto the golf course. This would make for a much easier and quicker trip back to the car and had the added bonus of allowing me to find four golf balls along the way.

IT WAS A GOOD FRIDAY AND A FINE SATURDAY

Lead Checking and surveying, Allamakee County, Iowa
April 17 & 18, 1992
Mike Nelson and Marc Ohms

by Mike Nelson

I met up with Marc Ohms for a morning of caving on Good Friday. We got right in to surveying Devil's Den. It was short and sweet but awfully wet and low. Marc was terse about it, "I don't like this." I can't blame him as it wasn't actually as I had described it to him. I can't decide if my memory is defective or deceptive, but now that it's surveyed, it's irrelevant.

Next we made for Wet Reebok Cave. I had already surveyed it but Marc needed a look at it to draft the map from my data. Unfortunately, with the runoff, it was so high we would have gotten as wet in here as in the Devil's Den. As we had shucked the wet-suits already, he accepted my detailed explanation of the cave while marking notes and adding symbols to the sketch map.

We then walked across the valley to find Pinny Spring. We could've driven in from that landowner's side but I figured it would be quicker to walk from here than to strike up a conversation with this particular individual. It didn't appear to be where I had left it the last time I was there, so we went back to check out with Wet Reebok's landowners. I mentioned to them how an acquaintance of theirs had told me of a large cave on their property that the owner's supposedly had gone way back into for a long ways. I was suspicious of the story from the start and they verified that they had related the story of my two initial visits to this friend. So from them to him and back to me this 75 foot cave which is pretty long for Allamakee County, had grown into a really large cave that several people could explore for hours.

Next, Marc and I were antsy to check out Stafford Sandstone Cave which I had learned just two weeks prior had changed hands and was open to cavers for the first in about 20 years. Everything about it matched the cave file except its size. Described as 150 feet with nice iron stains, we found 20 feet with a dismal little crawlway at the bottom. I could've negotiated the first body length via the twist and shout method but beyond there, digging would be needed. Being gutless cavers and having a limited amount of time before Marc had to leave for work, we mapped the entrance room then split. I would later learn that this restriction had filled in some over the years of

disuse and that the tight spot was actually rather short and easy digging. We will be back; stay tuned.

Marc had to be on the road soon so we killed a few minutes at A.J. Spring Cave and inspected the dig site I advertised in my last trip report. Marc went to work and I went out to maintain some landowner relationships and lead check. My last contact on one lead (mentioned in last report) didn't prove fruitful. Another lead of a huge sink-hole with a hole into bedrock was only marginally better. It existed and the hole at the base was obvious. However, the joint aligned 6 inch by 2 foot conduit hidden just under a lip and behind a fresh mud and stick fill was impenetrable to man. Slightly higher and in a line with this across the sink was a small phreatic tube with raccoon prints running into it. A lead I had heard about on a prominent dairy farm on Hwy. 9 in Ludlow township had been filled 10 years earlier but the owner sure wished he'd known about us then. It sure went, he said.

I spent the next couple of hours getting lost on gravel roads I'd never traveled before, another hobby of mine, before discovering familiar territory in Union Township and backtracking to Winneshiek County and Coldwater Cave. Beat from a long day of caving, I hit the compound, ate some supper, and napped until cavers started showing up. We lied to each other 'til after midnight then turned in.

Saturday found Larry Welch, Mike Lace, and me back in Guardian Fangs Passage. We dropped off the trowel at the Snuggery Dome Passage, stopped by that phreatic elliptical passage long enough for Mike Lace's eyes to bug out and sparkle (too bad the water level was higher yet than last month) then jumped right into surveying into the dome. The first shot past the restriction wasn't too bad, the second was. We did manage to get this to be a long shot over a meander, saving a station or two. But I probably could have gotten us right up to the side lead into the dome if I had been more attentive. One more fairly easy shot put us into "Nice Lead Dome".

It's a very good sized dome considering the last 30 feet into it. It's about 50 feet high by 45 feet long and 12 to 16 feet wide near the center. Water was running profusely from a lead that any reasonably equipped capable climber should be able to access. A couple of well placed bedding joints might accept pitons or some other form of protection. The base of the lead is 12 to 14 feet above the floor and appears to be of enterable size for as far back as one can see. The joint extended to the ceiling of the dome, which is the same flat bedding for the entire dome, from deep in the lead on one end to the pinch on the other. Anyone willing to push this should be able to recruit several willing Sherpas and/or assistants. The passage continues miserably small on past the dome lead. It had been pushed but to what extent is not known.

We backtracked to the Snuggery Passage and Mike and Larry each took a couple of diggs toward the dome while I took a little cave nap. They made satisfactory progress in the stubborn cobbles and made it "easy" to get as far as it was hard to get before, before becoming fatigued. They couldn't quite get to a little bend from which they felt they might be able to glimpse the dome. Next time. We marched on out of the cave against a pretty brutal stream flow.

SINCE I'M IN DECORAH ANYWAY

Twin Springs, Winneshiek County, Iowa
April 18, 1992

by Greg McCarty

I had to go to Decorah on some business and decided to check a few things while I was in the area. It was a mild enough evening but it had been a very damp month so far and the weather was threatening again. The Upper Iowa River was up nicely so I thought I'd take a look at Twin Springs. Along the way I managed to locate two pitiful crevice

caves along the road below Phelps Park. I wasn't dressed for it so I couldn't check them out. Neither one is likely to go much more than fifteen feet though. Once at Twin Springs, I found the flow from the springs to be high but clear. The overflow was not flowing. Deciding to head north, I quickly checked out a quarry near Burr Oak. In the back end there is a possible crevice but it was too messy for me to work my way up to it in the clothes I was wearing. Right below it I found two nice gastropod fossils(snails). One was the flat spiral and the other was the upward spiral. I finished off this little jaunt by stopping off at "Hotel" Coldwater to see if the high water had interfered with caving. Mike Nelson, Doug Schmuecker, Mike Lace and a new caver from the Ukraine were there to report that it had. I talked with folks for about 45 minutes, then Mike Nelson and I left during a brisk rain shower. Driving home, I had to play dodge the amphibian as toads were soaking up heat from the pavement.

DIG THOSE LEADS

Leads near Fayette, Fayette County, Iowa
April 29, 1992

by Greg McCarty

I needed to get out and do something and I've grown fond of multi-purpose trips, so I decided to go somewhere where I could do several things at once. Only two miles from my home was a place where I could try and locate some mushrooms, look for snakes, and dig in some cave leads. An early evening trip here would be just the thing. I told Deb I would be back around 8:00 because of a television program I wanted to catch. If I wasn't back for a while after that she should look for me laying at the base of one of two bluffs or with my car stalled once again on the highway.

The mushroom hunting was a bust. Amazingly, it seemed too dry. All the recent cold weather had also kept the snakes still trapped in their dens. I only found two small snakes near one of the dens. By 6:00 I was ready to start tackling my first digging lead. Plenty of time, I thought, to check my leads before 8:00. The rock in this area is Devonian in age and so these leads have at least a prayer of going a little ways (as opposed to the lower Silurian junk on the other side of Fayette). The first two leads were in an old abandoned railroad cut. Climbing up to the first one would be difficult due to the extreme shattered condition of the rock. I had succeeded in making it once before, though, so I was fairly confident. I had a rope to haul the tools and flashlight up once I made it. At first I couldn't get more than half way up to the lead. The loose rocks were everywhere and the only reasonably good rock was wet and slimy. It's not much over fifteen feet up, but on that shattered rock, it seems a lot higher. I finally succeeded in reaching the ledge by the entrance and pulled up my tools.

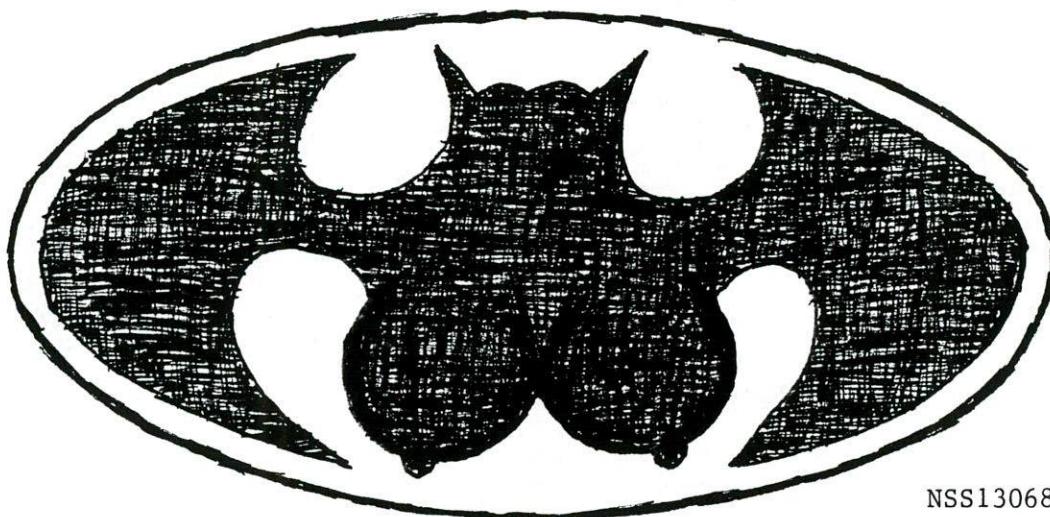
There were two places to dig but first I had to make the site a lot safer. I immediately regretted that I had elected to wear my usual stocking cap on this trip instead of a helmet. Cramming my torso into the hole as far as I could, I had to reach up above my precarious perch and locate loose rocks by feel and send them crashing down. This was so much fun I decided to chance getting one in the face so I could at least see what I was doing. This done, I had to pull down a couple of little vines. The first put dirt down my neck while a slight tug on the second caused a rock to peel loose and bounce off my skull. The cap prevented a scalp cut but not the headache. The ledge I was sitting on turned out to be a sloping stack of rocks which were sliding off into space while the leads I was supposed to dig into looked almost certainly worthless. For some reason I didn't seem to be enjoying myself much anymore.

I did my duty, though, and dug for twenty minutes to make sure that both holes were indeed duds. This established, I now had to get down. My boots had gotten muddy kicking dirt out of the holes and the mud had piled up on many of the holds on the way down. I checked to see if my polypropylene haul line could be looped over something

but there was nothing. After tossing the tools down, I removed all the loose rock I could before starting down. One side benefit of this was that I could now get a little further into a crack. This proved to be enough and I made it down without incident. Before I had climbed up, I had spotted another hole at the very base of the cut. Hundreds of pounds of loose rock was attached in a large sloping mass above the hole. Not wanting to dig under this, I managed to remove enough rock from the base of the mass so that I could topple it. After digging through the rubble from the collapse, I was able to see that the hole only went for a few feet before turning into an impassable slot.

The other lead I wanted to work on here was an interesting looking solutional opening with both vertical and horizontal components. When I first found this opening, I couldn't check it because the climb down to it from above was too risky. Now you could walk right up to it thanks to some highway construction. Instead of replacing the bridge over the cut, they just filled it in and paved over it. Unfortunately, they filled things too high where this opening is and buried most of it. I took a before picture and removed the unsafe rocks above the entrance then dug alongside the rock to get an idea of the extent of the opening. The more I dug, the more I knew I would have to dig. My lead was going down so I would have to make a trench of ever greater depth and length alongside the face. This was for drainage as well as access. The water flowed down the slope against the rock and would have funneled everything into the hole. In the hole, I found large chunks of blacktop road surface that had been bulldozed into it while grading the slope.

As I dug merrily along, I heard a car stop. Deb was here to inform me that it was twenty after eight. Time flies when you're having fun. After showing her around, I explained that I was done with hazardous duty and would keep on digging for now. The farther I dug, the more interesting it became. I still hadn't found an opening that went into the bluff (instead of just down through the face of it as a round tube) but it looked neat. It was discouraging to think that this was all open just a couple of years ago but then again, it is a heck of a lot easier to reach now. I was getting exhausted from all the digging (but still pressing on) when Deb showed up again to inform me it was now a quarter after eleven. I showed her the progress and explained that I would dig for fifteen more minutes to deepen the trench and then call it quits. It wasn't easy but I got most of the trenching done that I felt I should. I finished with a trench up to two feet wide by four feet deep by twelve feet long. The soil was very sandy, or I never would have gotten this far. After taking a couple more pictures, I packed up and headed back home. I'll have to give this one another try.



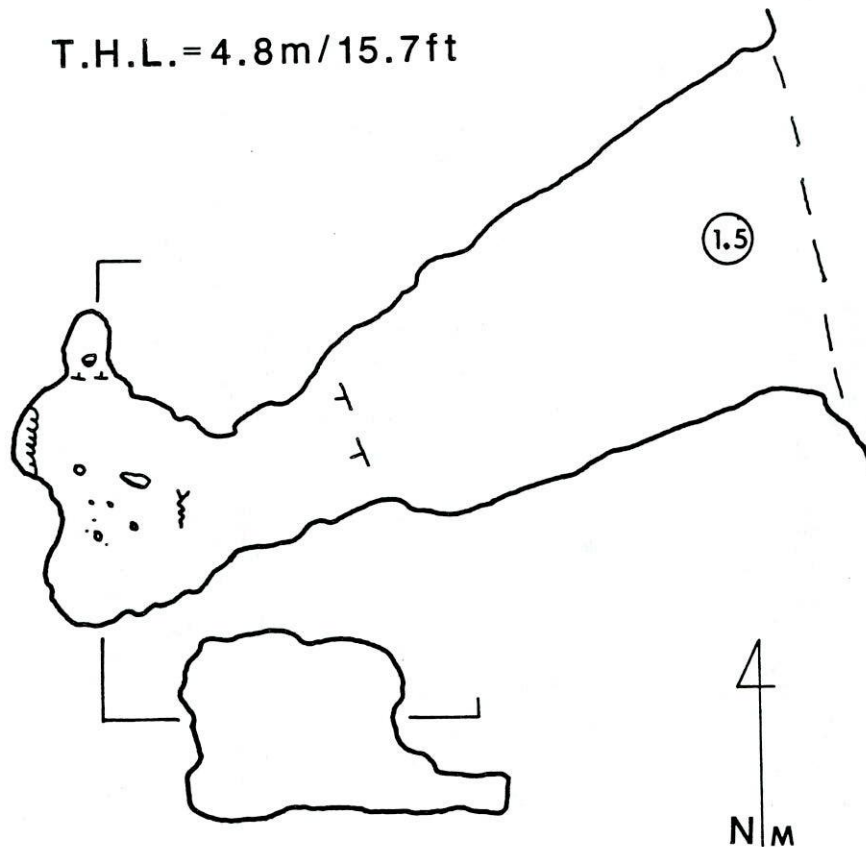
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IOWA CAVE BAT, FEMALE, LACTATING

Spider Cave

Jackson County, Iowa

T.H.L. = 4.8m / 15.7ft



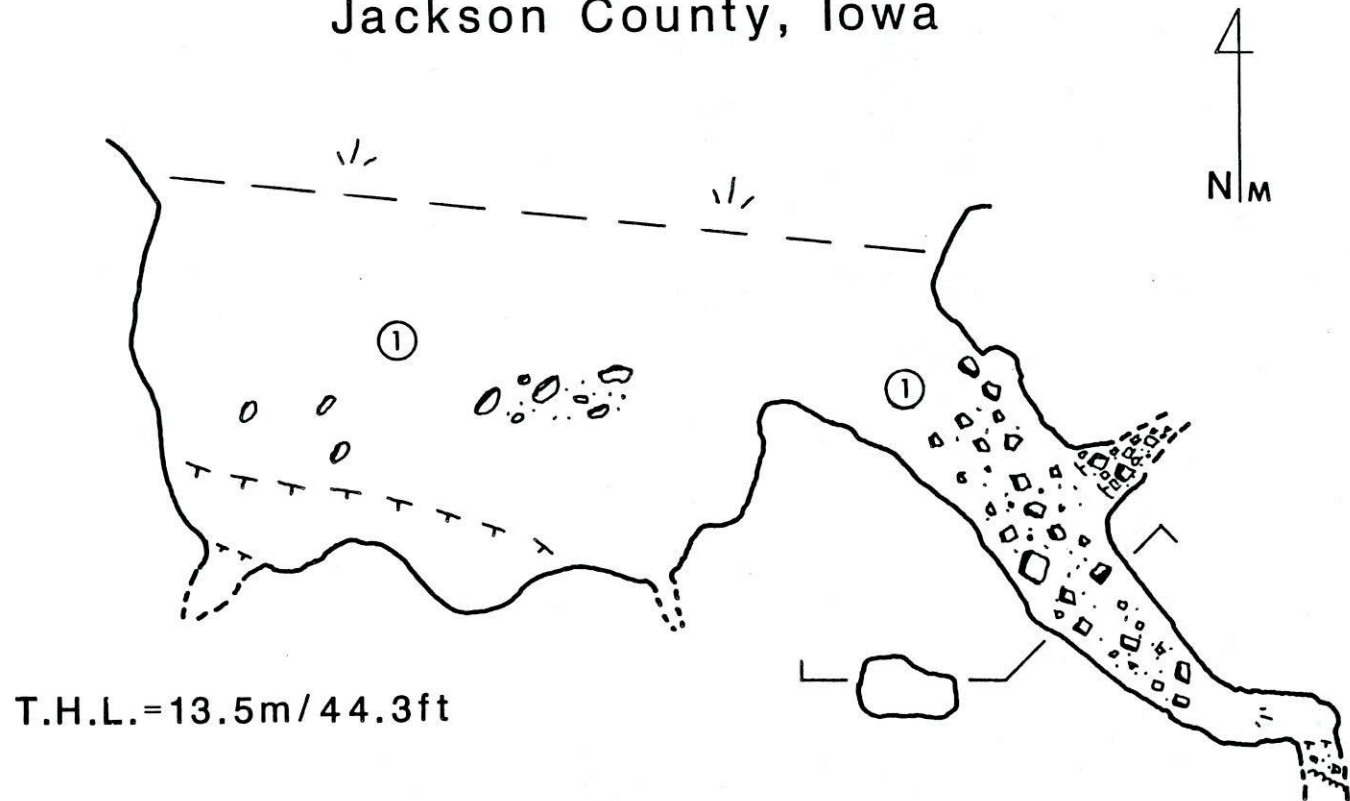
0 2
meters

compass and tape survey
by Ohms and Beck

Marc Ohms

Coral Cave

Jackson County, Iowa

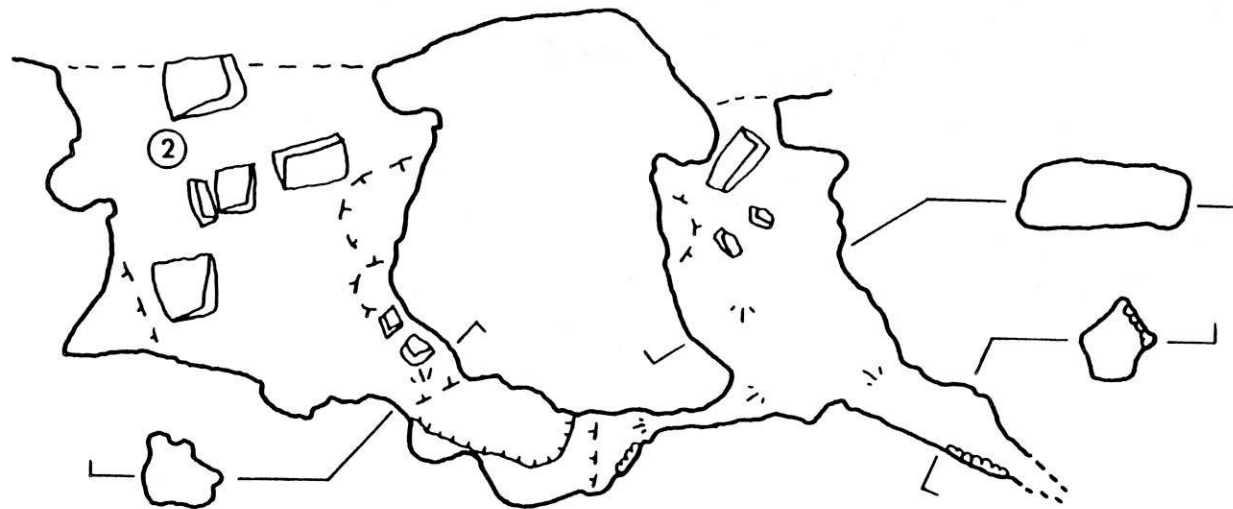


MARC OHMS

Skull Cave

Jackson County, Iowa

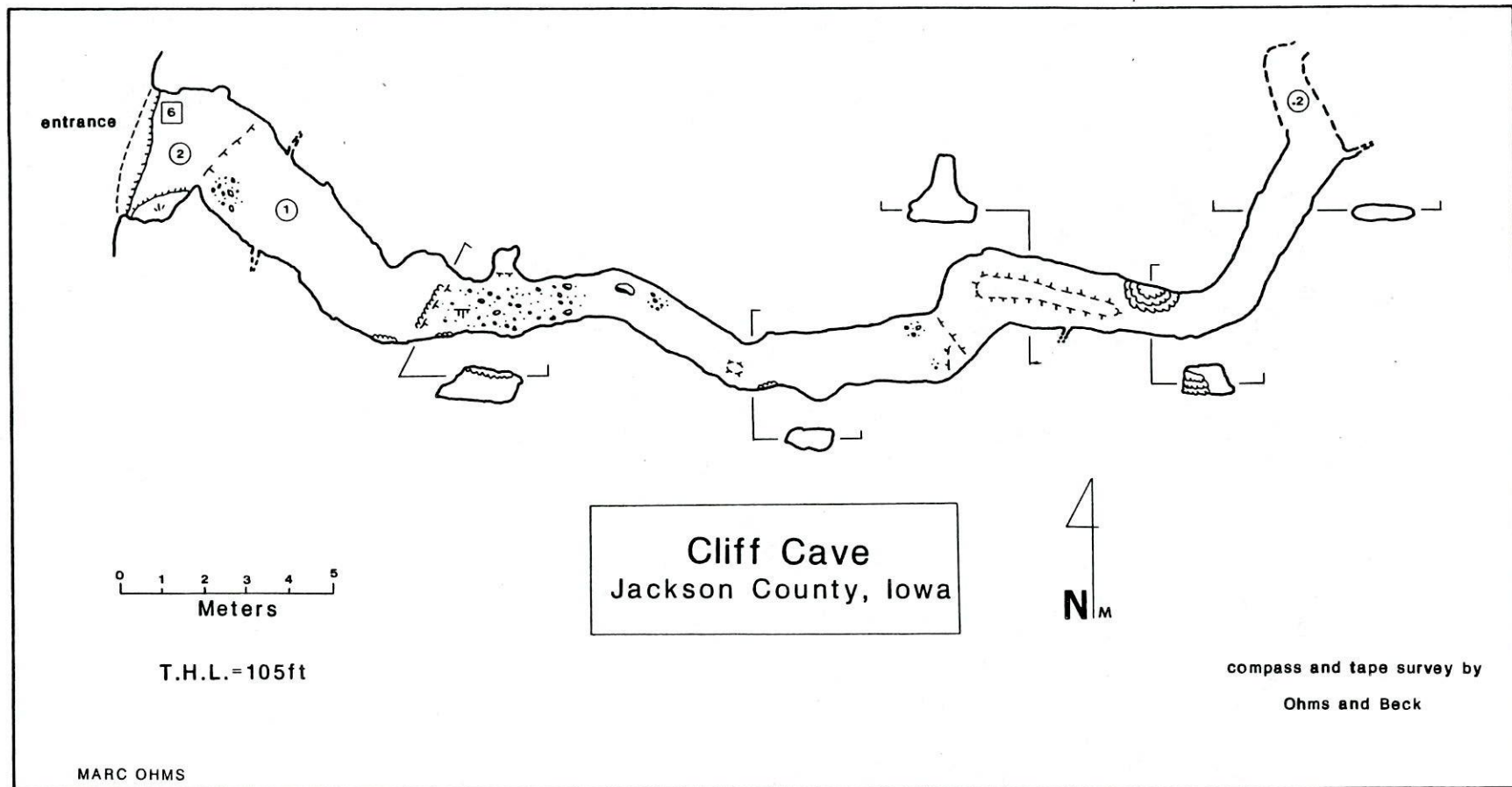
T.H.L.=54.2ft/16.51m



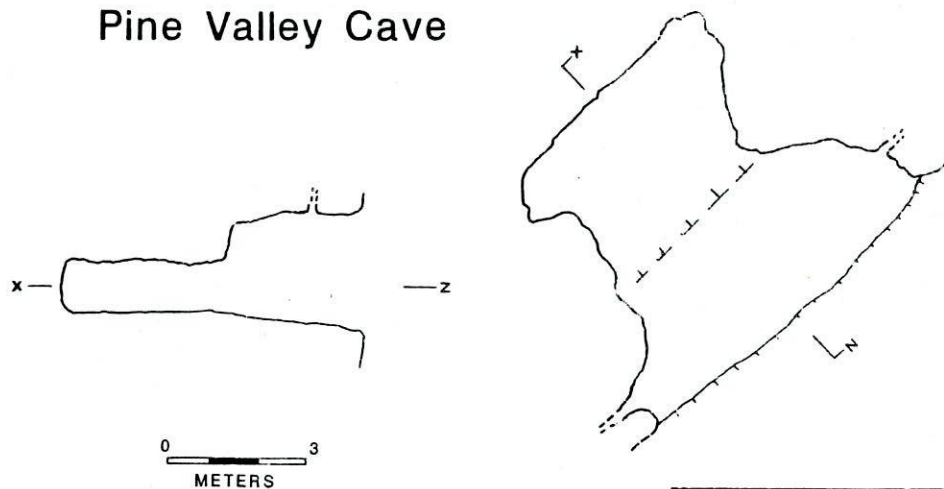
0 5
meters

compass and tape survey
by Ohms and Beck

MARC OHMS



Pine Valley Cave



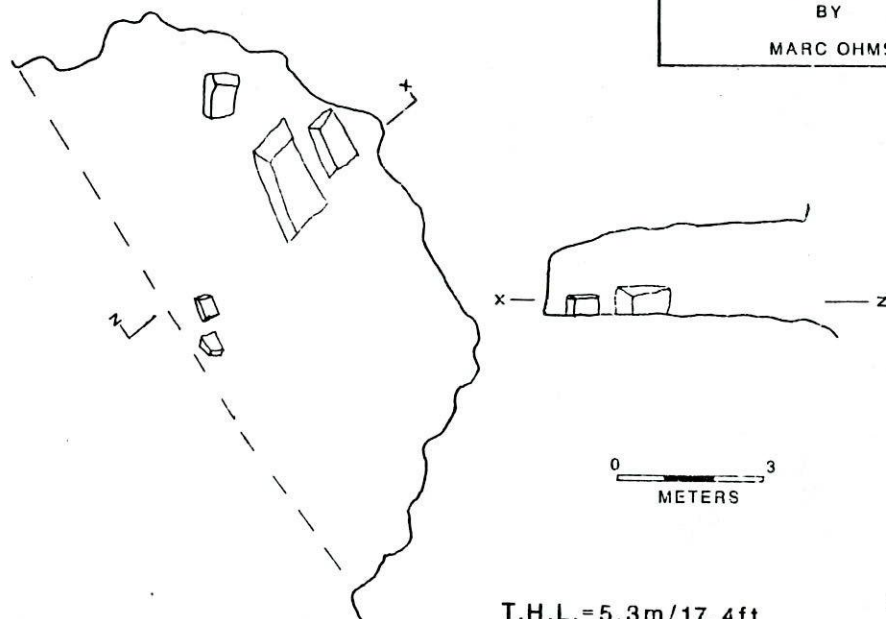
T.H.L.=6m/19.7ft

Jackson County Iowa

COMPASS AND TAPE SURVEY
BY
MARC OHMS



Climb High Shelter



T.H.L.=5.3m/17.4ft

Blue Cave

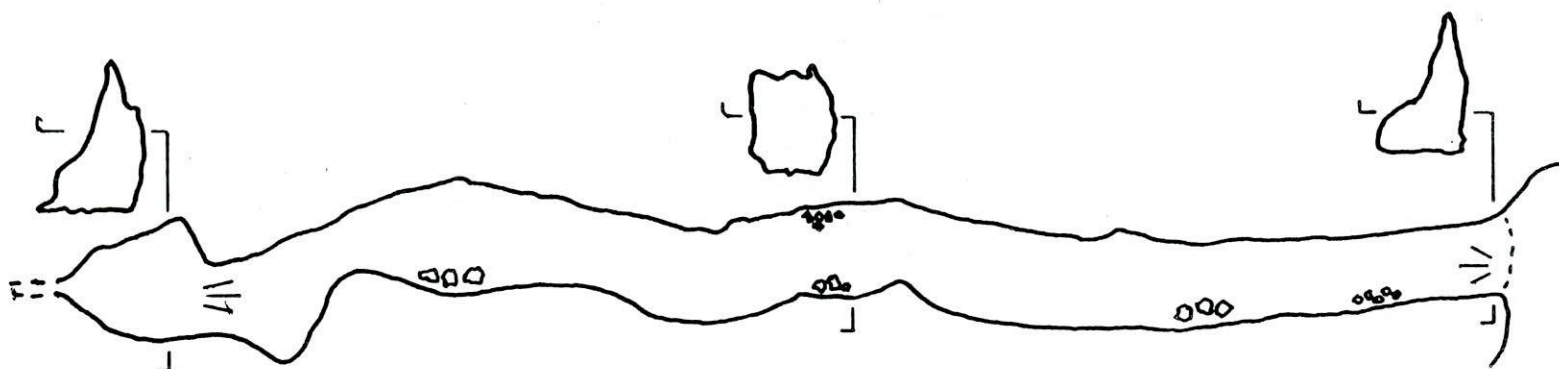


T.H.L.= 10m/32.8ft



ZOO CAVE #1

Dubuque County, Iowa

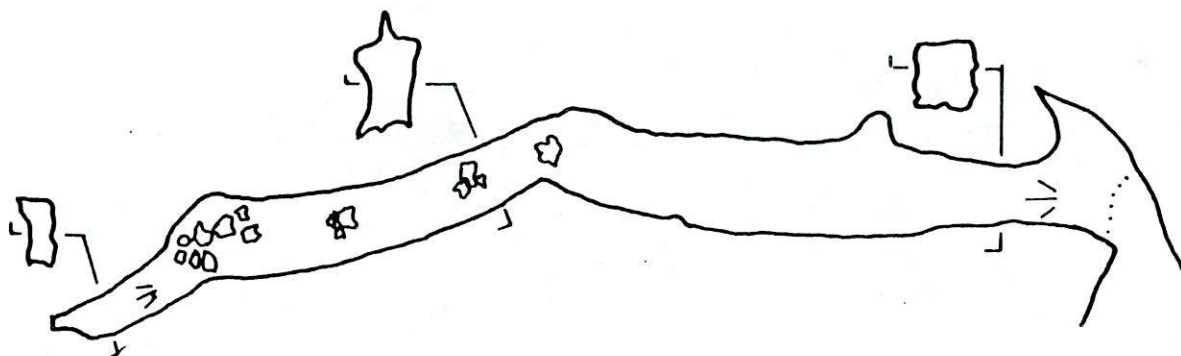


surveyed by:
C. Beck
G. Hartman
M. Lace
M. Ohms

0 4
meters
t.h.l. = 61.8 ft 18.7 m

ZOO CAVE #2

Dubuque County, Iowa



surveyed by:
C. Beck
G. Hartman
M. Lace
M. Ohms

0 4
meters
t.h.l. - 13.7m / 45ft



Indian Cave, Johnson County, Iowa
surveyed length = 5.7 meters/18.7 feet



N
m

plan view

fossils

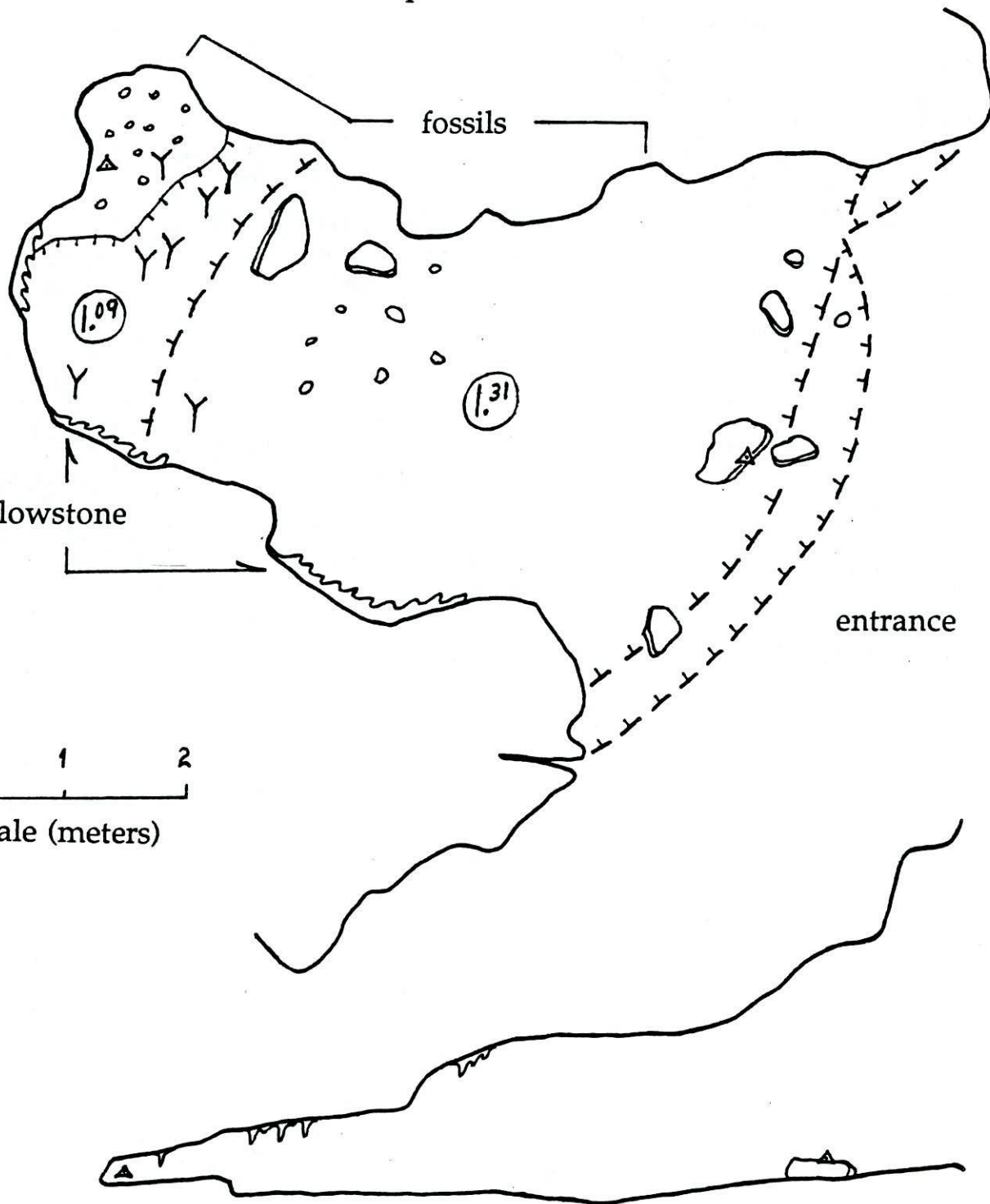
flowstone

entrance

0 1 2
scale (meters)

survey & cartography
by M. Lace

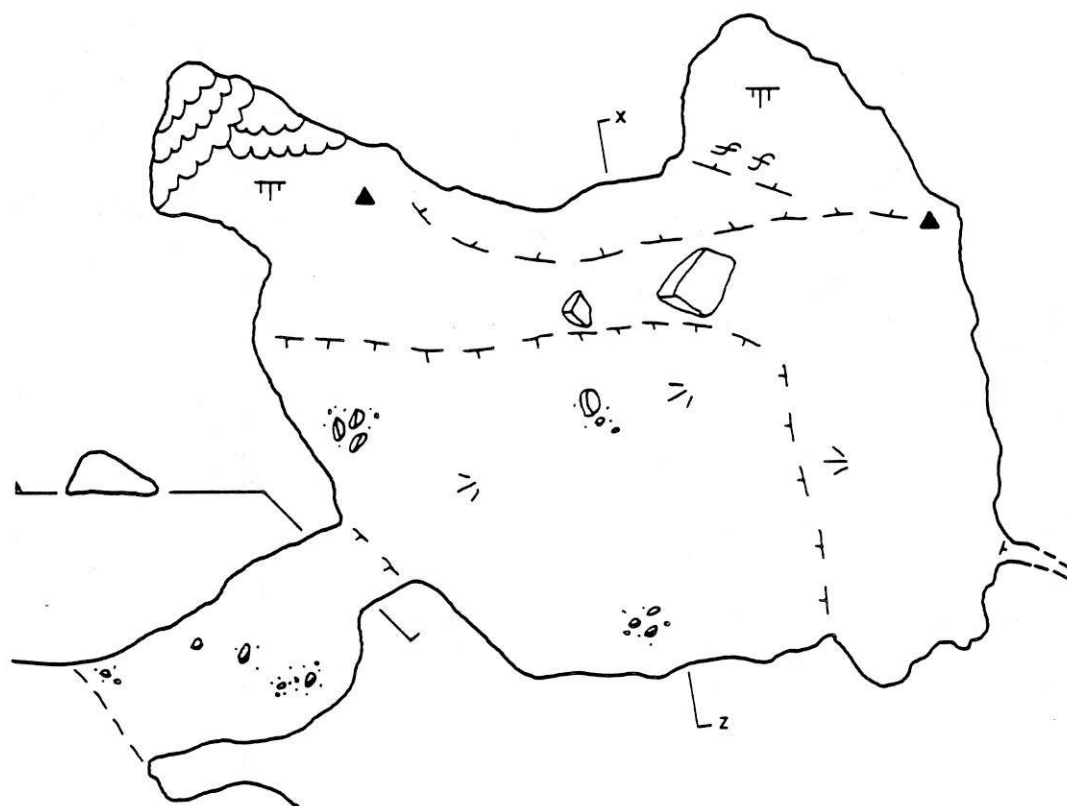
profile view



WINDMILL CAVE

JONES COUNTY, IOWA

T.H.L.=10.6m/34.78ft



compass and tape survey

0 2
meters

4
N
m

by Ohms, Lace, Schenck, and Krakinovsky

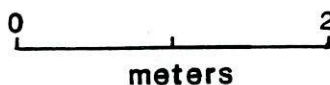
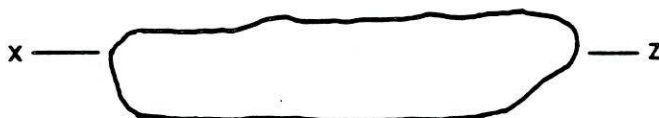
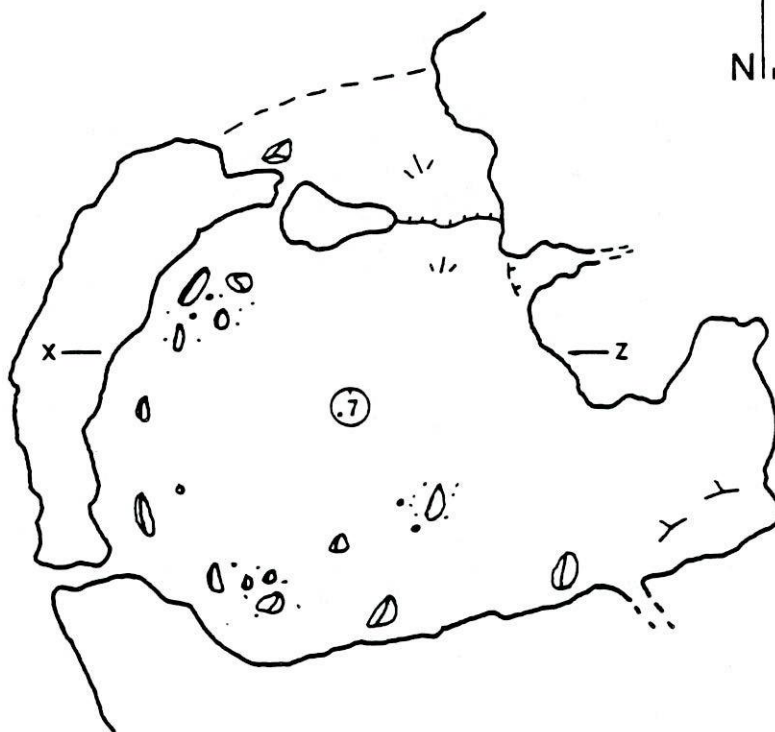


Marc Ohms

PENNY CAVE

JONES COUNTY, IOWA

T.H.L. = 4.86m / 15.94ft



compass and tape survey

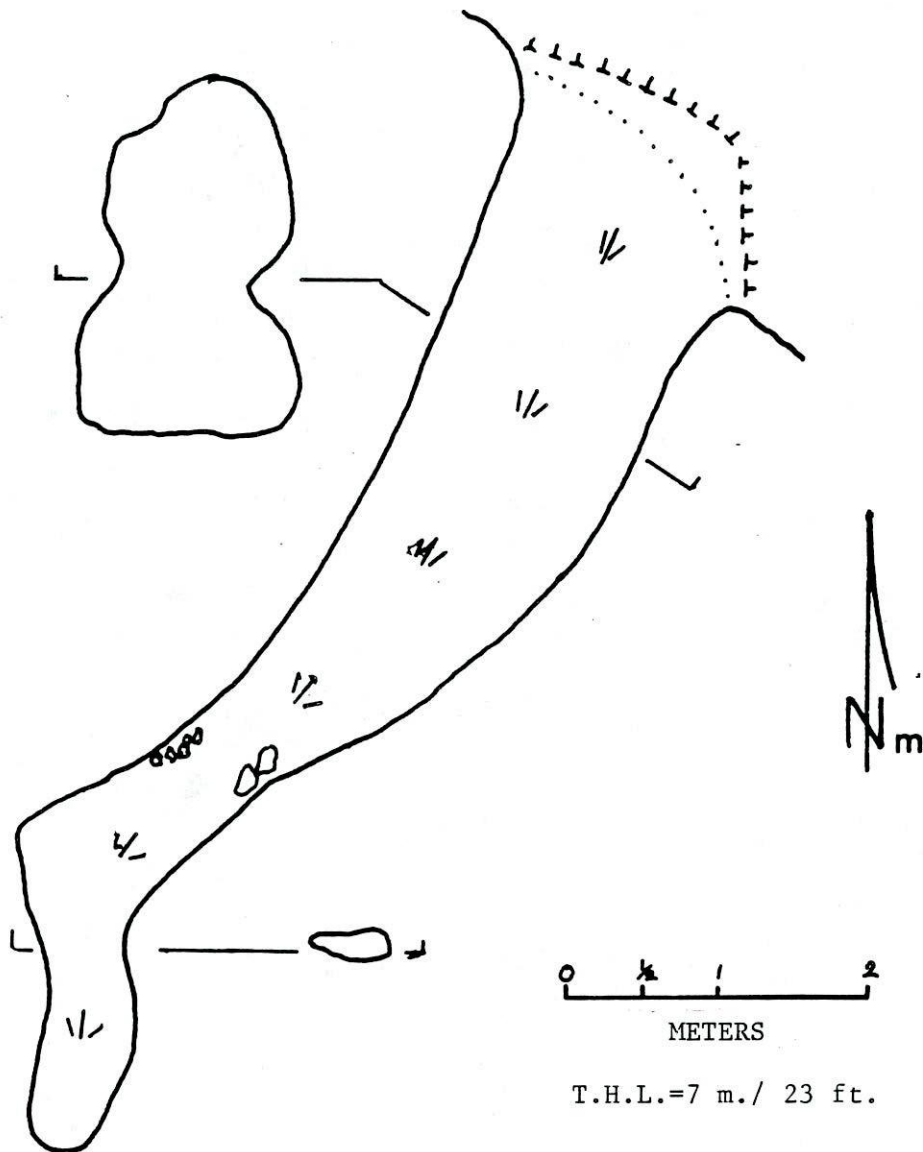
by Ohms, Lace, Schenck, and Krakinovsky



Marc Ohms

CHIMNEY CAVE

Jackson County, Iowa



SURVEYED BY
C. BECK
M. OHMS

